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ABSTRACT

A study of the distribution and the nature of the so-called Multiple Subject Construction (MSC) in Korean is presented from the perspective of functional syntax theory. The major proposal is that multiple subjectivization is possible only when the first noun phrase of the multiple subjects is characterized by the rest of the clause. The characterizational property of MSCs is detailed, and some constructions that appear to be MSCs but are not are examined. It is suggested that some cases of honorification in Korean seem to be triggered by the topic or theme of the sentence, and not its subject, contrary to the widely accepted assumption that only the subject can trigger the honorification agreement. Contains 10 references. (MSE)

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MULTIPLE SUBJECT CONSTRUCTIONS IN KOREAN:
A Functional Explanation

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Abstract: This paper investigates the distribution and the nature of the so-called multiple subject constructions in Korean from the perspective of the functional syntax (Kuno (1987)). The major proposal of this paper is that multiple subjectivization is possible only when the first NP of the multiple subjects is characterized by the rest of the clause. I will provide evidence from the analysis of various multiple subject constructions including idiomatic expressions in this language.

1. Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to re-examine the Multiple Subject Constructions (MSCs) in Korean, exemplified by (1) below, and to propose a functional analysis of them.

(1) Chelswu-ka kho-ka khu-ta.
Chelswu-Nom nose-Nom big-Dec
'Chelswu has a big nose.'

The main argument of this paper is that MSCs are possible only when the first NP of the multiple subjects is characterized by the remaining clause. This argument may follow from a more general discourse rule which states that an element in the list-initial position must be characterized by the rest of the string (cf. Kuno (1993 Fall, Class lecture)). In section 2, I will discuss in more detail the characterizational property of MSCs. In section 3, I

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will discuss some constructions which seem to be MSCs but actually are not. In section 4, I will try to explain why some cases of honorification in Korean seem to be triggered by the topic (or theme) of the sentence, and not by the subject of the sentence, contrary to the widely accepted assumption that only the subject can trigger the honorification agreement (see Shibatani (1977)). Section 5 concludes this paper.

2. Characterizational Property of MSCs

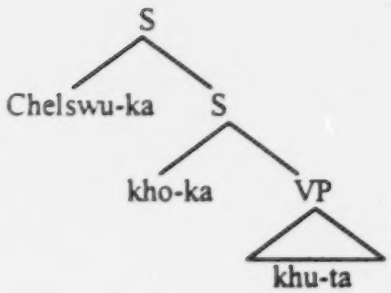
2.1 Inalienable Possession MSCs: To begin with, consider the following examples of inalienable possession MSCs:

(2) a. Chelswu-ka tali-ka ccalp-ta.
Chelswu-Nom leg-Nom short-Dec
'Chelswu's legs are short.'

b. Youngswu-ka meli-ka khu-ta.
Youngswu-Nom head-Nom big-Dec
'Youngswu's head is big.'

In sentences in (2), the relationship between the two nominative NPs is that of 'body-part', thereby being inalienable. It seems to be natural that the leftmost nominative NPs be characterized by the remaining clause in these cases. For example, *Chelswu* in (2a) is characterized as a person whose legs are short, and *Youngswu* in (2b) is characterized as a person who has a big head. Noting this fact, Nam and Ko (1985) argue that there are more than one subject-predicate relationship in these structures, as shown in the following structure.

(3)



According to them, the lower S is a predication of the higher subject *chelswu* and VP is a predication of the lower subject *kho*. This line of reasoning is reminiscent of Choe's (1928) claim that the upper NP in (3) is a 'big-subject' and the lower NP a 'small-subject'. If the term 'subject' is meant to be a syntactic one in their proposal, the following examples whose meaning is not drastically changed from that of (3) may remain unaccounted for in their analysis.

(4) Chelswu-nun kho-ka khu-ta.
Chelswu-Top nose-Nom big-Dec
'As for Chelswu, his nose is big.'

Regardless of whether this sentence is derived from (3) or base-generated, *Chelswu* in (4) is not a subject, but a topic. Therefore, there is simply no subject-predicate relationship in (4) any more. However, if we recall the very meaning of the term *topic* (i.e. something which is talked about), it becomes apparent that Chelswu is characterized by the remaining clause.

2.2 Family Member MSCs: Next, I would like to examine another type of MSCs where the relationship between the two subject NPs is that of family members. Consider the examples in (5) below:

(5) a. Chelswu-ka emenim-i tolaka-si-ess-ta.
Chelswu-Nom mother-Nom die-Hon-Pst-Dec
'Chelswu's mother died.'

b. Youngswu-ka nwuna-ka yeppu-ta.
Youngswu-Nom elder sister-Nom beautiful-Dec
'Youngswu's elder sister is beautiful.'

In the sentences in (5), the first nominative (subject) NPs are also characterized by the remaining clause of each sentence, although not as strongly as in the case of body-part relationships. It may be the case that what happens to the close family members such as a mother and an elder sister or the properties of them can say much about the person involved directly or indirectly. If we compare the sentences in (5) with those in (6) and (7), what I intend to show will become more apparent.

(6) a. Chelswu-uy kay-ka cwukessta.
Chelswu-Gen dog-Nom die-Pst-Dec
'Chelswu's dog died.'

b. ??/*Chelswu-ka kay-ka cwukessta.

(7) a. Youngswu-uy etten chinkwu-ka cwukessta.
Youngswu-Gen a certain friend-Nom die-Pst-Dec
'A certain friend of Youngswu died.'

b. ??/*Youngswu-ka etten chinkwu-ka cwukessta.

Sentences where there is a single subject with a genitive NP like (6a) and (7a) are grammatical. Yet, the corresponding multiple subject constructions given in (6b) and (7b) are not acceptable. Why is it so? Pets (such as dogs) and friends may have a different degree of significance/intimacy with a person who has them, and thereby should be dealt with differently regarding our discussion. However, it is apparent that the fact that someone's dog died does not say much about the owner of the dog as the death of his/her mother does about him/her. Likewise, the fact that a certain friend of his/her died does not seem to say much about him/her, not to mention characterizing him/her. If we change (7b) slightly, the grammaticality is much improved, as we see in (8).

(8) a. Youngswu-uy kacang chinhan chinkwu-ka cwukessta.
Youngswu-Gen most intimate friend-Nom die-Pst-Dec
'Youngswu's closest friend died.'
b. ?/??Youngswu-ka kacang chinhan chinkwu-ka cwukessta.

The gramaticality of (8b) is fluctuating. Although some people (including myself) don't like (8b), the sentence is surely much better than (7b). However, family membership does not seem to guarantee the acceptability of MSCs. Consider the following examples.

(9) a. *Chelswu-ka tongsayng-i wulko-issta.
Chelswu-Nom younger brother-Nom crying-is-Dec
'Chelswu's younger brother is crying.'
b. *Youngswu-ka nwuna-ka kongpwuhako-iss-ta.
Youngswu-Nom elder sister-Nom studying is-Dec
'Youngswu's elder sister is studying.'

Here, *tongsayng* 'younger brother' or *nwuna* 'elder sister' are family members, thereby have a close/intimate relationship with the person involved. However, the leftmost nominative NPs of (9a,b) are not characterized by the remaining clauses, since just one occurrence of events can not characterize the person involved. In other words, in (9a), Chelswu's younger brother's crying does not say much about Chelswu, because this happening is fleeting. Likewise, in (9b), Youngswu's elder sister's studying does not say much about Youngswu. This is of course different from (8b), repeated here as (10).

(10) Youngswu-ka nwuna-ka yeppu-ta.
Youngswu-Nom elder-sister-Nom beautiful-Dec
'Youngswu's elder sister is beautiful.'

In (10), the fact that Youngswu's elder sister is beautiful surely affect Youngswu much, differently from, say, one occurrence of Youngswu's elder sister's studying. For example, the former may be something which

Youngswu may take pride in, and therefore, it can say something about Youngswu directly or indirectly. This is reminiscent of Kuno's (1987) Characterizational Property of Passive Sentences with Inanimate Subjects which states that passive sentences with inanimate subjects and human *by*-agentives are acceptable to the extent that they can be interpreted as sentences that define or characterize the subjects. Consider the following.

(11) a. ??Hamlet was read by John.
b. Hamlet was read even by John.
c. Hamlet was read by millions of millions of people.
d. Hamlet was written by Shakespeare.

Sentences in (11) are passives with inanimate subjects and human *by*-agentives. Therefore, these are subject to Kuno's Passive Rule, roughly stated in the above. (11a) says that *Hamlet* was read by a person named John, presumably once. This one occurrence of event, however, does not characterize the novel *Hamlet*. If we insert the focus element *even* as in (11b), *Hamlet* can be characterized as a book which is read even by a rare reader like *John*. The fact that millions of millions of people read Hamlet tells what kind of a novel *Hamlet* is: it is a very popular novel. Finally if we recall that one of the best ways to describe a novel is to tell who the author is, it becomes clear that (11d) is a typical case of characterization.

2.3 Alienable Possession MSCs: Now, let us move on to the following sort of examples in which the two nominative marked NPs are arguably alienable:

(12) a. *Chelswu-ka kabang-i mwukep-ta.
Chelswu-Nom briefcase-Nom heavy-Dec
'Chelswu's briefcase is heavy.'
b. Chelswu-uy kabang-i mwukep-ta.
Chelswu-Gen

(13) a. Chelswu-ka chayk-i manh-ta.
Chelswu-Nom book-Nom many-Dec
'Chelswu has many books.'
b. Chelswu-uy chayk-i manhta.
Chelswu-Gen

While (12b) is grammatical, (12a), which is presumably derived from the grammatical sentence (12b), is not acceptable. This contrasts with the seemingly identical (13a). That is, the relationships between two subject NPs of both cases are alienable one. Nevertheless, one is acceptable, while the other is not. If so, why is (12a) not acceptable, while (13a) is acceptable? Again, the characterizational property of MSCs may account for this contrast. The fact that Chelswu's briefcase is heavy does not say anything about Chelswu, hence being unacceptable. On the other hand, the fact that Chelswu has many books describes what kind of man Chelswu is: he may be an enthusiastic reader, or may be a book-collector. Hence (13b) is acceptable. Consider, further, the following example.

(14) a. I hakkyo-ka kyocang sensayngnim-i tolaka-si-ess-ta.
this school-Nom headmaster-Nom die-Hon-Pst-Dec
The headmaster of this school died.'
b. I hákkyo-uy kyocang sensayngnim-i tolaka-si-ess-ta.
hakkyo-Gen
(15) a. ??I hakkyo-ka haksayng hana-ka cwukess-ta.
this school-Nom student one-Nom die-Pst-Dec
'One of the students of this school died.'
b. I hakkyo-uy haksayng hana-ka cwukessta.
hakkyo-Gen

The sentence (14a) is more natural than (15a), although the syntactic structures of them are identical. My functional explanation is as follows. Usually, there is one headmaster per a school. Therefore, the fact that the headmaster of a specific school died tells what the school is in the state of. However, a student's death does not seem to characterize the school.

2.4 Idiomatic Expressions: Lastly, there are some idiomatic expressions involving body-parts. Consider the following table.

Table 1

expression	idiomatic meaning	literal meaning
pali-nelpta	'has wide contacts'	'foot is wide'
son-i khuta	'is lavish/ generous'	'hand is big'
meli-ka cohta	'is intelligent'	'head is beautiful'

These expressions can occur in MSCs, as shown in (16-18) below.

(16) a. Chelswu-ka pal-i nelp-ta.
Chelswu-Nom foot-Nom wide-Dec
'Chelswu has wide contacts.'

b. *Chelswu-uy pal-i nelp-ta.
Chelswu-Gen

(17) a. Youngswu-ka son-i khu-ta.
Youngswu-Nom hand-Nom big-Dec
'Youngswu is very lavish.'

b. *Youngswu-uy son-i khu-ta.
Youngswu-Gen

(18) a. Hyenswu-ka meli-ka coh-ta.
Hyenswu-Nom head-Nom good-Dec
'Hyenswu is intelligent.'

b. *Hyenswu-uy meli-ka coh-ta.
Hyenswu-Gen

The interpretation of sentential idioms may provide additional arguments for the characterizational property of MSCs. Since the relationship between

the referent of the first subject NP and that of the second NP is one of the inalienable possession, the a-sentences in (16-18) would be derived from the b-sentences, respectively, according to the proponents of movement theory. Yet, the b-sentences do not have such idiomatic meaning as in the a-sentences, and therefore we cannot derive the a- sentences from the b-sentences, respectively. Moreover, the first subject NPs in the a-sentences are characterized by the remaining sentential idiomatic expression in each of the examples.

3. Non-MSCs

In this section, we will discuss some constructions which look like MSCs but in fact are not. To begin with, not every element marked with *-i/-ka* is a subject. Consider the following Japanese and Korean examples.

(19) a. Taroo-ga tenisu-ga zyoozu-da. (Japanese)
Taro-ka tennis-ka sangtangha-ta (Korean)
Taro-Nom tennis-Nom good at-Dec
'Taro is good at tennis.'

b. Taroo-ga sakana-ga suki-da. (Japanese)
Taro-ka mwulkoki-ka coh-ta. (Korean)
Taro-Nom fish-Nom fond of-Dec
'Taro likes fish.'

As Kuno (1978, 1980) notes, the second *-ga/-ka* marked elements in (19a,b) are not real subject: they are objects with nominative case marker. In what way they get their case assigned is not relevant to our present discussion. Consider, further, the following double nominative NP constructions.

(20) a. Ecye pwute-ka nalssi-ka coha-cyess-ta.
yesterday from-Nom weather-Nom good-become-Pst-Dec
'The weather became good from yesterday.'

b. Seoul-eyse-ka salki-ka coh-ta.
Seoul-in-Nom living-Nom good-Dec
'Seoul is good to live in.'

c. I kongcang-i pwul-i na-ss-ta.
this factory-Nom fire-Nom break out-Pst-Dec
'Fire broke out in this factory.'

In all the above sentences, it is not likely that the PPs "from yesterday", "in Seoul", "in this factory" are subjects. The first *-ka* marked elements get interpreted as focus or exhaustive listing. Therefore, these cases are not under our discussion. Although these examples, with those in (19), are not real multiple subject constructions, it can be said about these constructions that the first nominative NPs are characterized by the rest of the string.

Let us consider another type of MSCs.

(21) Kim sacangnim-i pise-ka cohu-si-ta.
Kim president-Nom secretary-Nom good is-Hon-Dec
'(i) President Kim likes his secretary.' (Non-MSC)
'(ii) President Kim's secretary is nice.' (MSC)

Sentence (21) is ambiguous in two ways. In one interpretation (that is, in Non-MSC interpretation), the second nominative NP *pise* is not a subject, but an object just like that in (19b). In the other interpretation (i.e., in MSC interpretation), both the nominative NPs are real subjects, as we have discussed until now. In this case, we may have the following single subject construction.

(21ii)' Kim sacangnim-uy pise-ka cohu-si-ta.
Kim president-Gen secretary-Nom nice is-Hon-Dec
'President Kim's secretary is nice.'

Only in this sense is the sentence (21) a multiple subject construction. And in this case, the first subject is characterized by the remaining S. Of course, this does not exclude the possibility of the subject of a sentence being char-

acterized by VP in single subject construction. All that I am claiming here is that one should be careful to distinguish what is the real case of MSCs from what is not. In the next section, I will discuss Korean Honorifics in relation to MSCs.

4. Honorifics and MSCs

Since Shibatani's (1977) influential work, the tests for subjecthood, namely, reflexivization and subject honorification, have often been used indiscriminately as diagnostics for subjecthood in both Japanese and Korean. The tests have been employed in such a manner that anything that can be either the antecedent of reflexives or the target of honorification has been claimed to be a "subject". Let us take a look at Kim and Kuno's (1985, henceforth, K&K) explanation regarding subject honorification.

(22) a. Kim sensayngnim-kkeyse Swuni-ka cohu-si-ta.
Kim teacher-Hon-Nom (Hon) Swuni-Nom like-Hon-Dec
'Teacher Kim likes Swuni.'

b. *Swuni-ka Kim sensayngnim-kkeyse cohu-si-ta.
Swuni-Nom Kim teacher-Nom like-Hon-Dec
'Swuni likes Teacher Kim.'

The fact that (22a) is acceptable while (22b) is not strongly suggests that they are not multiple subject constructions; the first nominative NP behaves like a real subject but the second nominative NP lacks the honorific-triggering characteristic of subjecthood. However, it does not seem to be the case that there is no problem with their explanation. Consider:

(23) a. ??Halapeci-uy saep-i silphayha-si-ess-ta.
grandfather-Gen business-Nom fail-Hon-Pst-Dec
'Grandfather's business failed.'

b. Halapeci-kkeyse saep-i silphayha-si-ess-ta.
grandfather-Nom business-Nom fail-Hon-Pst-Dec
'Grandfather's business failed.'

According to them, the acceptability of (23b) shows that the first nominative NP is a subject. If this is right, how can we decide the subject of the sentences in (16), here repeated as (24)?

(24) a. I hakkyo-ka kyocang sensayngnim-i tolaka-si-ess-ta.
this school-Nom headmaster-Nom die-Hon-Pst-Dec
'The headmaster of this school died.'
b. I hakkyo-uy kyocang sensayngnim-i tolaka-si-essta.
school-Gen

They would explain that in this case, the second nominative NP must be a subject due to the honorific-agreement. However, there is no syntactic difference between (23) and (24), while the subject is different from each other. Another problem with their argument is the fact that many people (including me) do not find (23a) awkward, though not perfect. Many Korean linguists find the similar sentences to (23a) better than what K&K (1985) thought to be. Look at the following examples from Yun (1991).

(25) a. Emenim-kkeyse kenkang-i cohu-si-ta.
mother-Nom (Hon) health-Nom good-Hon-Dec
'Mother's health is good.'
b. Emenim-uy kenkang-i cohu-si-ta.
mother-Gen health-Nom good-Hon-Dec
'Mother's health is good.'

(26) a. Apenim-kkeyse son-i caku-si-ta.
father (Hon)-Nom (Hon) hand-Nom small-Hon-Dec
'Father has small hands.'
b. Apenim-uy son-i caku-si-ta.
father (Hon)-Gen hand-Nom small-Hon-Dec
'Father has small hands.'

Let us consider a pair of such examples from Yoon (1987).

(27) a. ?Kim sacangnim-i kohyang-i me-si-ta.
Kim president-Nom hometown-Nom far-Hon-Dec
'President Kim's hometown is far.'

b. ?Kim sacangnim-uy kohyang-i me-si-ta.
president-Gen
'President Kim's hometown is far.'

(26b) and (27b) are fully acceptable to Yun (1991), and (30b) is quite natural to Yoon (1987), although these sentences have the same syntactic structure as that in (23b), which is K&K's (1985). Whether the grammatical judgment is correct or not is not our concern here. But the question is, why some people regard these sentences acceptable and others unacceptable? The answer to this question may be found in Yoon's (1987) account. He argues "that while the grammar of honorifics is seemingly sensitive to the subject, it is possible to link the "subject honorifics" to categories other than subjects in pragmatically biased contexts" (Yoon (1987) pp.151). Therefore, we cannot say, contra K&K, that one of the two nominative NPs in honorific constructions is a subject and the other is not. There may be indeed two real subjects in honorific constructions (a real case of MSCs) and honorification may occur on the level of pragmatics. When the referent of the first nominative NP, which may coincidentally be a subject, deserves deference, honorification may occur, as in (23b), and (25a, 26a, 27a). When the referent of the genitive NP, which is not a subject, deserves deference, honorification occurs by the whole NP as in (23a) and (24b, 25b, 26b, 27b).

5. Summary

In this paper, I have shown that MSCs is possible only when the first subject is characterized by the rest of the clause in the first two sections. Specifically, I have shown that the so called inalienable possession MSCs always show characterizational property and that family member MSCs and alienable possession MSCs are acceptable when the rest of the clause characterizes the first subject directly or indirectly. In section 3, I tried to distinguish real MSCs from fake MSCs. Finally in section 4, I pr some evidence against honorifics analysis as a subjecthood test prop K&K. It is also argued that the fluctuating grammatical judgment s be due to the discrepancy between syntactic subjecthood and pragmatics for honorification.

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